ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of characterizing a sample surface having a surface anomaly region includes the steps of profiling the sample surface to generate surface characteristic data, and generating a histogram based on the profiling step. Then, the method measures a surface anomaly in the surface anomaly region based on the generating step. The method further includes the step of selecting a zone of interest from the surface characterization data. The zone of interest preferably includes the surface anomaly region, wherein the surface anomaly region includes one of erosion and dishing. Preferably, the histogram includes a first peak corresponding to a generally planar portion of the sample surface, and a second peak corresponding to the surface anomaly. Moreover, the measuring step includes determining a distance between the first and second peaks, the distance being indicative of the depth of the surface anomaly.